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Shreveport’s plan to lure retail, restaurant business gets a boost from Amazon employee numbers

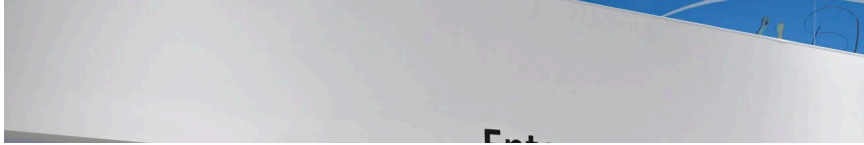
BY LIZ SWAINE | Staff writer

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The city of Shreveport's focus on drawing additional retail to the northern part of the city has gotten another push.

It comes from Amazon numbers.

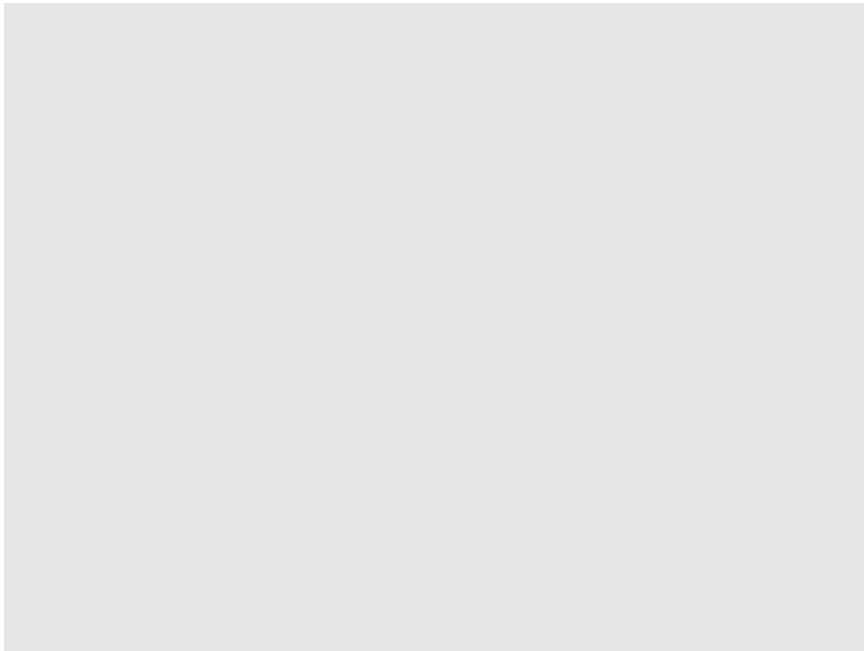
These aren't numbers coming directly from Amazon, because, as Shreveport Economic Development Director Bill Sabo told The Shreveport Bossier City Advocate, "They are proprietary about that."

The numbers come instead from cellphone data, from the 'pings' when people use their phone, which show when they are active, on the go, and where they are going to and from.

The data shows waves of movement of their 2,000 employees, plus vendors and delivery services during the morning, midday and afternoon, information that would not only be helpful to current business owners, but as Sabo hopes, will work to draw new businesses and other development to the area.

In July, the city retained a Birmingham-based consulting company called Retail Strategies to help the city create a road map to lure retail, restaurant, and grocery stores to a portion of the city that runs from the Highland neighborhood to Sunset Acres to Monkhouse Drive and north toward the city limits.

Already, data collected by the company has given Sabo dollar figures, showing the amount of money the area is potentially losing to Bossier, Texas or south Shreveport, where retail is plentiful.



Franki Ramos, senior safety manager for the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Shreveport, La., speaks Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, during a tour of the facility, about what the company provides so employees can be proactive with wellness.

By JILL PICKETT | Staff photographer

The ‘pings’ show that 65% of the employees of the Amazon fulfillment center on 1625 Corporate Dr. live near the plant and 22% of them live in the 71107 Zip code. All those people, said Sabo, need groceries and other goods.

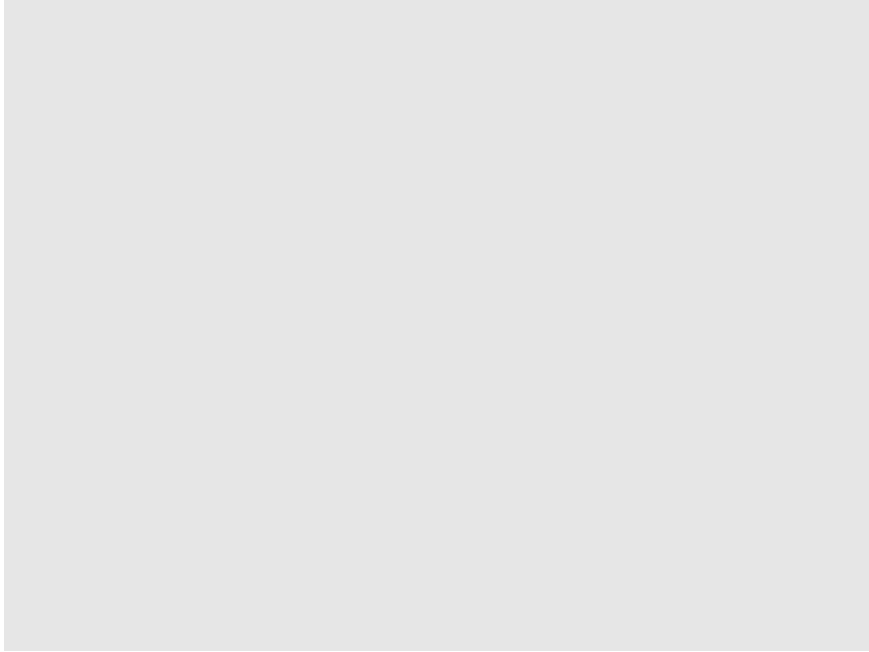
“Amazon is a big portion of the redevelopment of North Shreveport, and we needed to know where those people lived and where they spent money. I mean if everybody was coming from East Texas, that's a different story than having a vast majority of the workforce living in north Shreveport.” He said North Market Street and the MLK area are an “ideal retail capture zone.”

“This is a really untapped area and we're right now in the process of figuring out the best way of rebranding or you know, bringing new life to that area.”

Sabo said the original Retail Strategies report showed that the buying power of the region is roughly \$2 billion yearly. Adding details of demographics, salary range, and when people are moving around gives Sabo and the city more focus on the types of businesses to target.

At present, according to Sabo, the data support small value grocery, quick-service food, discount retail, auto service and workforce housing.

He said the city’s work on luring additional retail to the area will continue with the city’s one-stop website, clarity in food truck and alcohol beverage licensing, and



The Amazon Fulfillment Center in Shreveport, La., called SHV1, Friday, Sept. 27, 2024.

By JILL PICKETT | Staff photographer

continued engagement in north Shreveport through Mayor Tom Arceneaux's Block-by-Block cleanup and blight remediation push.

"Together," he said, "Those efforts create a stronger foundation for attracting the types of retail and services residents have been asking for."